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ABSTRACT

This paper analyzes spoken usage of English prepositions by two groups of Ontarian elementary students at the Grade 2 and Grade 5 levels. The first group (29 subjects) consists of bilingual Franco-Ontarian students from Welland and Sudbury. The second group (8 subjects) is composed of monolingual English students from Toronto. Examination of the frequency of preposition errors in obligatory contexts reveals: (a) the order of preposition acquisition is essentially the same for the monolingual and bilingual students at both grade levels; (b) the rate of acquisition for the locative prepositions "to" and "into" is lower for the bilinguals than for the monolinguals, although the rate of acquisition for other prepositions is similar for the two groups; and (c) the types of errors found in the bilinguals' preposition usage differ from those found in the monolinguals'. It is argued that points (b) and (c) may indicate influence of French preposition usage, particularly of the prepositions "a" ("at," "to") and "dans" ("in," "into"), on the bilinguals' acquisition of the English locatives "to" and "into." Such interference may thus have a retarding effect on acquisition of certain prepositions in a second language. (Author/CFM)

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Acquisition of English Prepositions by Monolingual and Bilingual (French/English) Ontarian Students *

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0. Introduction

This paper compares results of analyses of English preposition usage by two groups of Ontarian elementary students both at the Grade 2 and Grade 5 levels. The first group consists of bilingual (quasi-simultaneous acquisition of French and English) Franco-Ontarian students from Welland and Sudbury. The second group is composed of monolingual English students from Toronto.

The data on preposition usage by the bilinguals are interesting in several respects. First, having controlled for language dominance (English or French) among the bilinguals, we are in a position to examine the possible influence of patterns of language dominance on English preposition acquisition from age 7 onward. Second, it has been reported in several studies that second language learners' proficiency in English preposition usage correlates highly with their overall proficiency in English (cf. Oller and Inal 1971; Stubbs and Tucker 1974). On its own merit then, preposition usage is an important area of research in the field of second language acquisition. Third, given our base line data on preposition usage by English monolinguals, the data on the bilinguals' usage permit comparison of first and second language learning strategies (interlanguage transfer, overgeneralization, omission, etc.) and of the sequencing of English preposition acquisition. The data on the monolinguals' preposition usage are also of interest in view of the general lack of studies devoted to first language develop-

ment from age 5 onward (cf. Palermo and Molfese 1972) and the lack of a unified data base on the development of English preposition usage for this age group.

1. Methodology

1.1 Sample

The bilingual group is composed of 15 Grade 2 and 14 Grade 5 students enrolled in French language schools in Welland and Sudbury, Ontario. A total of 14 females and 15 males were selected. Socio-economic stratification based on parental occupations yielded a weighted sample of four working class, five middle class, and six upper-middle class students in Grade 2, and a sample of four working class, six middle class, and four upper-middle class students in Grade 5. Self-reports on language usage in the home (in parent-child, child-parent and child-child communication) indicated that among the Grade 2 students, seven subjects had French as their dominant language and eight English. Among the Grade 5 students, two of the subjects were English-dominant bilinguals and the remaining 12 were French-dominant.

A few words on the sociolinguistic settings in Welland and Sudbury are in order. In both communities francophones are outnumbered by anglophones: francophones make up 17% of the population in Welland and 27% in Sudbury (National Census of Canada,1971). Nonetheless,

elementary education in French has been available in both communities for a number of years. Among the students entering the French elementary schools, one finds a large number of individuals who, mainly due to language use patterns in the home, command a good knowledge of English and a minimum or no knowledge of French or a good knowledge of French and a minimum of English. Such diversity in language backgrounds poses obvious problems to educators in French language schools (cf. Mougeon and Canale 1977 for further discussion).

The monolingual group is composed of four students in Grade 2 and four in Grade 5 at an English language school in Toronto. An equal number of males and females were selected at each grade level. All the students come from upper-middle or professional class environments. Due to lack of research funds we have been unable to weight the monolingual group with students representing other economic groups.

1.2 Data collection

The data were obtained through recorded interviews conducted at the schools with each subject. The interviews ranged in length from 30 - 45 minutes, and were semi-directed to cover such topics as leisure activities, school and home life, personal experiences and aspirations, story-telling, etc. All interviews were transcribed and checked for accuracy of transcription.

1.3 Tallying procedures

Tallying of the standard and non-standard uses of English prepositions found in the transcribed interviews took place in three steps.

First, the authors established every occurence of a context in which use of an English preposition was required -- see Brown's (1973: 255) discussion of an 'obligatory context' as a test item. Not counted as obligatory contexts were: (a) occurences of particles, prepositions not followed by an NP or, in the case of the sandhi-form to, by an infinitive (examples: He went in; He stayed by the ...; We want to ...); (b) ambiguous uses, i.e. where the intended meaning of a preposition is not clear (examples: I like traveling in the plane = by plane or in a specific plane?; I stayed on a farm for a summer camp = at a summer camp or that served as a summer camp?); (c) occurences that are part of a larger non-standard or ambiguous structure (example: She went in the Papa bear's bed = She got into Papa bear's bed?); (d) instances in which the student immediately self-corrects (example: We go at ... to church); (e) repetitions within the same prepositional phrase (example: in the, in the week is counted as only one obligatory context); (f) cases in which ordering of the direct and indirect object differs from that found in standard Canadian English (example: He gives us it) ; and (g) occasions of the preposition of in the expressions kind of, sort of and in the prepositional constructions in front of, on top of, etc.

Second, the authors judged preposition usage in each obligatory context as either standard or non standard. These judgments were arrived at jointly, based on two of the authors' native intuitions. Non-standard usages were grouped as substitutions (example: I went at the slide for to the slide), omissions (example: He went hide), redundant uses (example : It could lay three million eggs by a day), and misuses (example: He dressed into an Eskimo for as an Eskimo). In the tables which summarize our findings on preposition usage (cf. Results section), we have included as errors only those non-standard usages grouped as substitutions or omissions.[1]

Third, the prepositions to be examined were classified in the following types:

about, examples: a book about birds, think about something

at in its locative (+ LOC) sense, examples: at home, at school

at in its temporal (+ TEMP) sense, examples: at night, at 3:00 p.m.

by in its instrumental (+ INSTR) sense, examples: make by hand, go by plane

by (+ LOC), example: He lives by us

for (+ TEMP), example: for an hour

for used to introduce an indirect object (IO), examples: He did it for me, The book is for your mother

from, examples: hear from someone, from Toronto

in (+ LOC), examples: in school, be in trouble, etc.

in (+ TEMP), example: in the morning

into, examples: go into a room, get into trouble, etc.

of, examples: a friend of mine, a few of us, a lot of

on (+ LOC), examples: on the table, on a trip, etc.

on (+ TEMP), example: on Monday

over, example: jump over the fence, all over the place, etc.

out of (+ INSTR), example: a house made out of straw

through, examples: through the door

to (+ IO), examples: give it to someone, talk to someone

to (+ LOC) used with a verb of motion, examples:

go to school, run to the store

to followed by an infinitive (+ VP), examples: I don't

want to go, You gotta stay

with, examples: go with someone, cut something with a knife

Note that we have only listed those types for which we found five or more obligatory contexts. Thus, not listed are some of the above prepositions used in other senses (examples: at in expressions such as at all, at last, look at someone; in in expressions such as in French, in time, as well as prepositions such as after, before, between, etc.

1.4 Data analysis

For both the bilingual and monolingual groups, the preposition usage of the Grade 2 students will be compared with that of the Grade 5 students. These comparisons will provide information on the developmental aspects of English preposition usage. Next, comparison of the bilinguals'and monolinguals' developmental patterns will permit examination of similarities and differences in the order of preposition acquisition for each group. The results obtained for the English-dominant and French-dominant bilinguals and the English monolinguals at the Grade 2 level will then be contrasted to investigate the influence of language dominance on preposition usage. Finally, we shall consider those aspects of the results that suggest different acquisition strategies for the bilinguals and monolinguals.

2. Results

We shall begin with the data on preposition usage by the Grade 2 bilingual subjects (cf. Table 1).

Assuming with Brown (1973) that a percentage of error of 5% or less indicates acquisition of a given item, we note that 15 of a total of 19 prepositions have not been completely acquired by the Grade 2 bilinguals. In spite of the low number of obligatory contexts

Preposition	Total - Items	Total - Errors	% Errors
INTO	66	65	98%
TO (+LOC)	93	45	48%
THROUGH	6	2	33%
BY (+LOC)	7	2	28%
ABOUT	11	3	27%
OUT OF (+INSTR)	13	3	23%
AT (+TEMP)	15	3	20%
TO (+IO)	53	10	19%
BY (+INSTR)	7	1	14%
ON (+TEMP)	10	1	10%
IN (+TEMP)	22	2	9%
FROM	14	1	7%
OF	73	5	7%
ON (+LOC)	139	9	6%
TO (+VP)	268	16	6%
WITH	75	2	4%
IN (+LOC)	181	7	4%
AT (+LOC)	42	1	2%
FOR (+IO)	66	1	2%

TABLE 1: Acquisition of English prepositions by Grade 2 bilingual students.

for certain prepositions (viz. through, by (+ INSTR), by (+ LOC)), the range of percentages of errors may be taken as a rough indication of the order in which these prepositions are being acquired by the Grade 2 bilinguals. Given this initial interpretation of Table 1, into and to (+ LOC), having the highest percentage of errors, would be likely candidates for late acquisition.

Turning to the results on preposition usage by the Grade 5 bilinguals (Table 2), we note that only seven of a total of 14 prepositions have not been completely acquired. This represents a marked improvement over the acquisition stage of the Grade 2 bilinguals shown in Table 1. The order of acquisition indicated in Table 2 is basically similar to that represented in Table 1. For example, we note that those prepositions having a percentage of error of less than 10% in Table 1 likewise have a percentage of error of less than 10% in Table 2. Furthermore, of the four prepositions that have a percentage of error of greater than 10% for both the Grade 2 and Grade 5 bilinguals, into, to (+ LOC) and at (+ TEMP) show the same sequence of acquisition. The percentages of errors found for these three prepositions also decrease from Grade 2 to Grade 5. The apparantly erratic behaviour of by (+ INSTR) may be a function of the low number of occurences of this preposition as noted above.

It is perhaps worth discussing the suggested order of acquisition for the locative prepositions listed in Tables 1 and 2 in light of H. Clark's (1973) 'complexity hypothesis'.[2] Within Clark's framework, the

Preposition	Total - Items	Total - Errors	% Errors
INTO	48	41	85%
TO (+LOC)	113	27	24%
BY (+INSTR)	9	2	22%
AT (+TEMP)	9	1	11%
FROM	21	2	9%
FOR (+IO)	54	3	6%
IN (+TEMP)	16	1	6%
IN (+LOC)	139	7	5%
OVER	18	1	5%
AT (+LOC)	61	3	5%
ON (+LOC)	126	5	4%
WITH	85	3	3%
TO (+VP)	301	3	1%
OF	132	1	1%

Table 2: Acquisition of English prepositions by Grade 5 bilingual students.

semantic complexity of locative prepositions increases with the number of dimensions (point, surface, volume) and the notion of directionality (no directionality, direction toward a location, direction away from a location) involved (1973: 41). In this light, it is interesting that the locatives at, on, in, which do not involve directionality, are among the first prepositions acquired completely by the bilinguals. Also consistent with Clark's hypothesis are the bilinguals' late acquisition of into (involving three dimensions and direction toward) and relatively late acquisition of from (involving one dimension and direction away from). However, the fact that the locative to (involving one dimension and direction toward) is found to be acquired late by both the Grade 2 and Grade 5 bilinguals is inconsistent with the predictions made by Clark's hypothesis. We shall discuss the locatives to and into in further detail in a later section.

Let us now turn to the findings for the monolingual English students in Grade 2 (Table 3) and Grade 5 (Table 4). We observe that at the Grade 2 level four of a total of 14 prepositions have not been acquired completely, whereas by Grade 5 it is only two out of twelve -- from and into. Once more, it appears that the locatives into and to are among the last prepositions acquired. In addition, although the data for at (+ TEMP) are minimal in the case of the Grade 5 monolinguals, this preposition seems to pose difficulties for the Grade 2 monolinguals as it did for the Grade 2 and Grade 5 bilinguals (cf. Tables 1 and 2).

Preposition	Total - Items	Total - Errors	% Errors
INTO	6	2	33%
AT (+TEMP)	10	1	10%
TO (+LOC)	43	4	9%
ON (+LOC)	27	1	4%
WITH	30	1	8%
OF	58	1	2%
IN (+LOC)	179	-	0%
TO (+UP)	75	-	0%
FOR (+IO)	13	-	0%
TO (+IO)	12	-	0%
ABOUT	11	-	0%
IN (+TEMP)	8	-	0%
AT (+LOC)	6	-	0%
FROM	5	-	0%

Table 3 : Acquisition of English prepositions by Grade 2 monolingual students.

Preposition	Total - Items	Total - Errors	% Errors
FROM	12	1	8%
INTO	12	1	8%
TO (+LOC)	60	3	5%
OF	98	4	4%
AT (+LOC)	24	1	4%
IN (+LOC)	100	3	3%
TO (+VP)	101	2	2%
ON (+LOC)	48	-	0%
WITH	32	-	0%
FOR (+IO)	17	-	0%
IN (+TEMP)	7	-	0%
AT (+TEMP)	5	-	0%

Table 4 : Acquisition of English prepositions by Grade 5 monolingual students.

As to the order of acquisition of locative prepositions suggested in Tables 3 and 4, we note again that at, in, on seem to be acquired by Grade 2 and that into and from tend to be acquired relatively late. Both of these findings are consistent with Clark's 'complexity hypothesis' (cf. above). However, the tendency for the locative to to be acquired relatively late by the monolinguals is, as noted in the case of the bilinguals, inconsistent with Clark's hypothesis.

To conclude this section, one is struck by the similar order of acquisition of prepositions found for the monolingual and bilingual students. Such findings have been reported in studies of second language learners' acquisition of various grammatical items and have been cited as support for the hypothesis that second language acquisition = first language acquisition (cf. Dulay and Burt 1974a and Ervin-Tripp 1974 for references and discussion). However, to our knowledge the order of preposition acquisition has not been compared for first and second language learners of English.[3]

One other aspect of our findings deserves some comment. For almost all the prepositions listed for the Grade 2 and Grade 5 monolinguals and bilinguals, the relative frequency of error is lower for the monolinguals than for the bilinguals. This lag is most interesting as regards the prepositions for which a percentage of errors in the range of 10% or greater was found for the bilinguals, and is graphically illustrated in Figures 1 and 2.

This lag becomes more obvious when we compare the percentages of errors for the bilinguals who have English as their dominant language

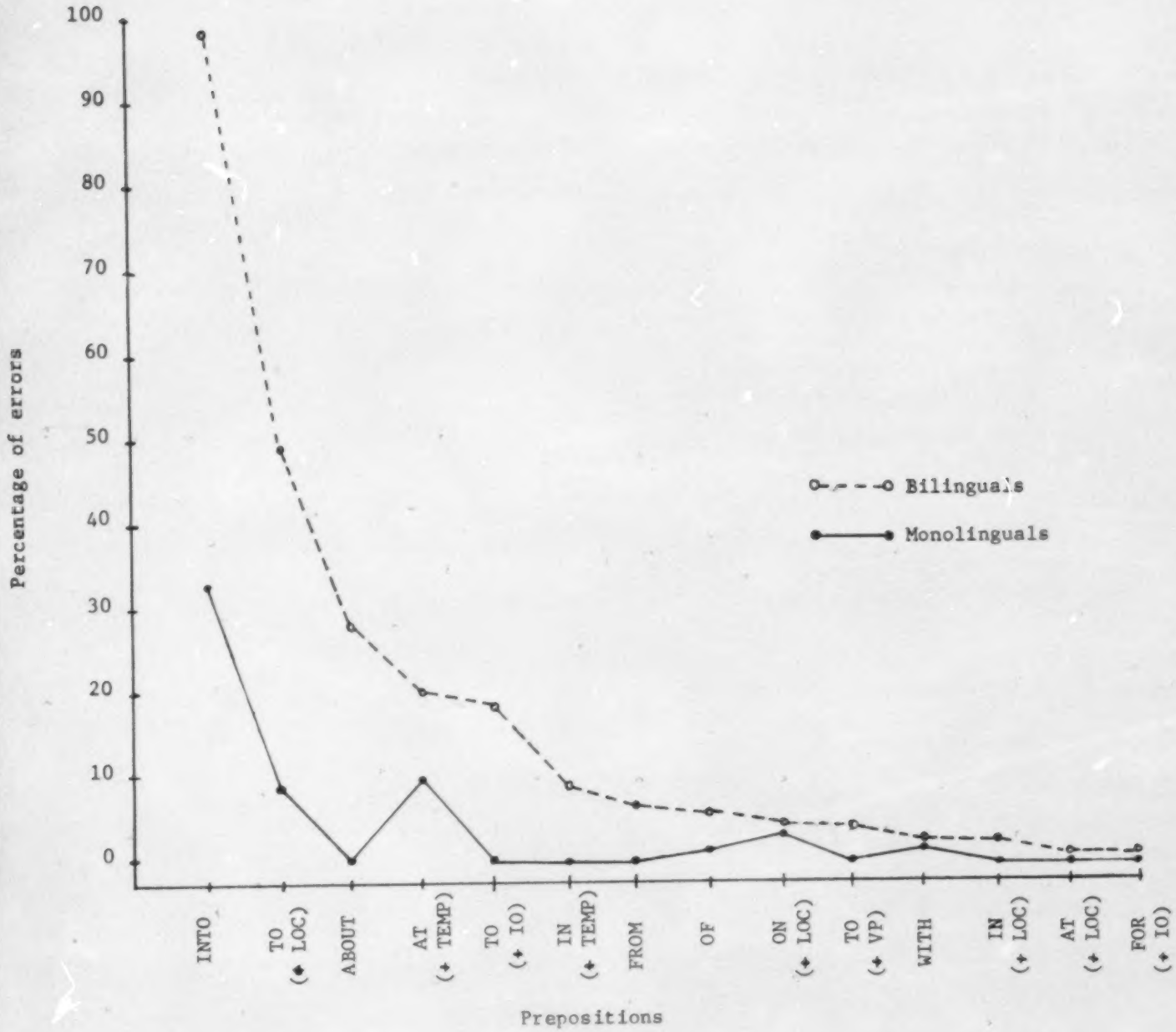

Figure 1. Comparison of preposition acquisition by monolingual and bilingual Grade 2 students

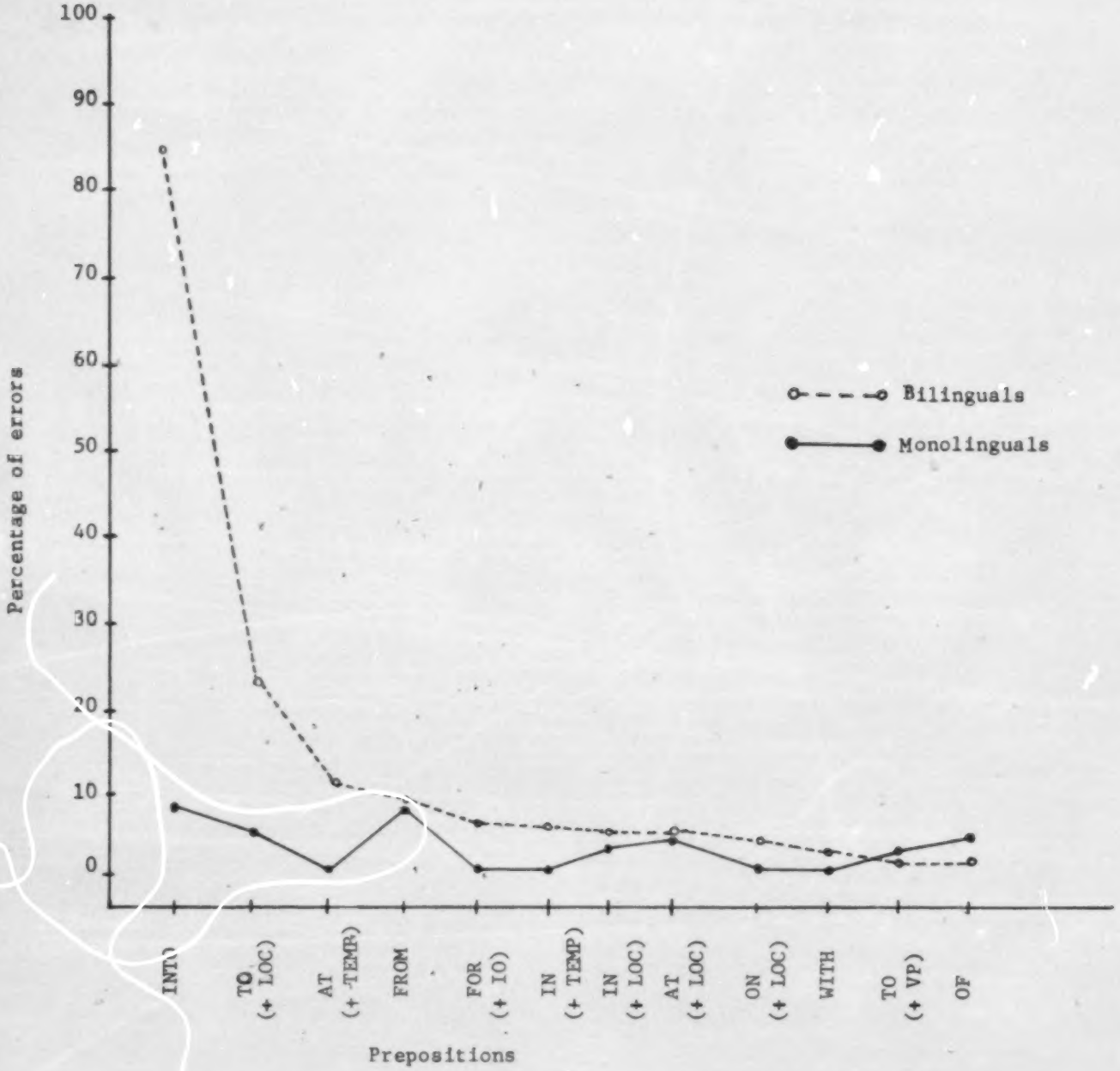

Figure 2. Comparison of preposition acquisition by monolingual and bilingual Grade 5 students

with those for whom French is dominant. As there were only two students in the Grade 5 bilingual group who indicated English as their dominant language (cf. the Methodology section), we present only the results concerning the Grade 2 bilinguals (Figure 3).

With the exception of into, the acquisition rate for the English-dominant bilinguals is almost identical to that for the monolingual English students. However, the French-dominant bilinguals seem to lag behind both of the other groups in their acquisition of nine of the twelve prepositions listed in Figure 3. The lag in the acquisition of locative to is the most striking one and will be discussed below.

Two possible explanations for the lag in preposition acquisition found for the French-dominant bilinguals come immediately to mind. First, the French-dominant students are exposed to less English than the English-dominant and monolingual students in as much as French is the language of communication in the home. The fact that the English-dominant bilinguals compare well with the monolinguals suggests that instruction in a language other than the one used at home does not, at least to Grade 2, adversely affect the rate of acquisition of prepositions. Conversely, the findings in Figure 3 suggest that the language of communication used in the home constitutes a crucial factor in the acquisition of English prepositions. This finding is consistent with Hébrard and Mougeon's (1975) finding that for this same

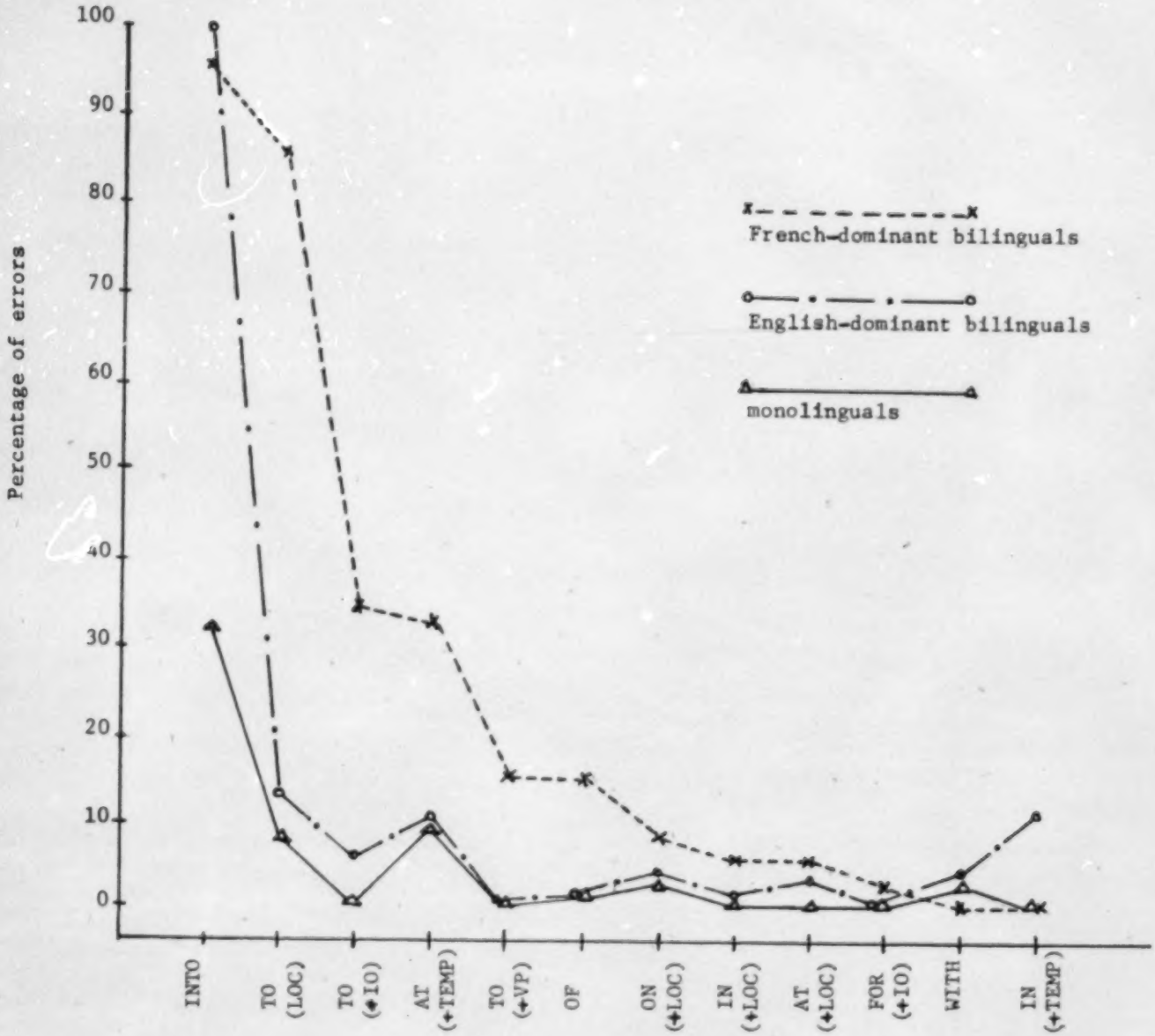

Figure 3 Acquisition of English prepositions by French dominant bilinguals, English dominant bilinguals and monolinguals at the Grade 2 level

French-dominant group, there is an overall lag in the acquisition of English syntax and vocabulary in comparison to the achievement of the English-dominant students. It must be emphasized that in neither Hébrard and Mougeon's study nor in this present research was the language used in peer group communication investigated.

A second, perhaps complementary, explanation for the French-dominant bilinguals' lag in preposition acquisition is interlanguage transfer (interference). There are four aspects of our findings that suggest this possibility. First, it is clear from the results that the locatives to and into pose greater difficulty for the bilingual students (especially the French-dominant ones -- cf. Figure 3) than for the monolingual students in both Grade 2 and Grade 5 (cf. Figures 1 and 2). However, other prepositions -- such as with, the locatives at, in, on, and in (+ TEMP) -- appear to be acquired with equal ease by both the bilinguals(French- and English-dominant) and monolinguals.

Second, the bilingual students do not make the same types of errors as the monolinguals in the use of the locative to. At the Grade 2 level, the bilinguals made a total of 45 errors in the use of the locative to, of which 39 involved substitution of at (1), four involved substitution of in (2), and two were ommissions (3).

(1) a. I don't go very often at the park.

b. We went at Florida.

c. I said to bring me at the hospital.

(2) a. We're going in the farm.

b. We go in the bench.

c. We go in Toronto every week.

d. They go in the front of his house.

(3) a. We gonna go ____ a parade.

b. We went _____ Walt Disney World.

As for the Grade 2 monolinguals, there was a total of four errors: one student substituted the prepositions at, in, on, through once each (4).

(4) a. Sometimes we go through our neighbors for supper.

b. We went on the pioneer village.

c. I play with my friends that go in the school.

d. Some people go at the net.

At the Grade 5 level, the bilingual students committed a total of 29 errors involving locative to: 17 substitutions of at (5), nine substitutions of in (6), and three ommissions (7).

(5) a. We went at my Grandma's.

b. My father was gone at a party.

c. I go at Towers and school.

(6) a. They gonna go in jail.

b. They go in the corner of the classroom.

c. She made plans to go in a motel.

d. I was going in Quebec.

(7) a. We made a big trip ___ Québec.

b. I went ____ the principal's office.

c. We went ___ all the places.

The Grade 5 monolinguals had a total of only three errors: all were omissions (8).[4]

(8) a. In July we're going _____ the cottage.

b. We're gonna go _____ the Rockies.

c. I started going ____ camp.

With respect to error types then, one observes a tendency among the bilingual students at both grade levels to substitute the prepositions at(strong tendency) and in (weak tendency) for the locative to.[5] On the other hand, it may be the case that the monolinguals in Grade 2 resort to substitution of a variety of locative prepositions for to whereas the Grade 5 monolinguals no longer do so.

Upon closer examination of the bilinguals' errors, we find that in is most often substituted for the locative to in expressions in which in could be used in a non-directional locative sense (e.g. We live in Toronto → We go in Toronto) and at is most often substituted in expressions where non-directional at would be permitted (e.g. We're at the store → We go at the store). Thus in Grade 2, the bilinguals use in in place of to in two out of four expressions where in(non-directional) could appear, and in Grade 5, in eight out of nine. The Grade 2 bilinguals substitute at for to in 31

out of 39 expressions where at (non-directional) is allowed and the Grade 5 bilinguals in twelve out of 17 expressions. As to the substitution of at for to where at(non-directional) is not allowed, it is striking to note that for the Grade 2 and Grade 5 bilinguals, ten out of 13 cases involve use of at preceding the name of a city (e.g. We went at Montreal). We note further that at is substituted for in(non-directional) in three other cases (example: We're at Montreal).

Most of the non-standard uses of the locative at pointed out above resemble the usage of the preposition à in French. Thus à can be used in a directional or non-directional sense with expressions of location such as the names of cities, l'école 'school', la maison 'home', le magasin 'store', etc. This semantic resemblance, in addition to the phonetic resemblance of à [æ] (in Ontarian French) and at [æ:t] may account for the fact that the bilinguals generally substitute at for the locative to whereas the monolinguals in our study do not.

However, two points must be borne in mind when considering the possible interference of à. First, we do not know -- neither from our data nor from the literature on acquisition of English as a first language -- whether there may be some stage at which learners of English as a native language substitute at for locative to (as for example, Clark's 'complexity hypothesis' would predict). This remains an interesting area of research. Second, there is no one-to-one correspondence between

the non-standard use of at found in the bilinguals' speech and the use of à in French. For example, the Grade 2 and Grade 5 bilinguals substitute at for to in sentences such as We went at my aunt's although there is no corresponding form with à in French (Nous sommes allés à ma tante); rather the preposition chez must be used (Nous sommes allés chez ma tante). Thus, each of these points suggests that the possibility of overgeneralization cannot be ruled out in favor of interference.

A third aspect of our findings suggesting interference from French involves the French-dominant bilinguals' substitution of at for to (+ IO). Seven out of eight of these students' errors involve such a substitution -- see (9) for examples.

(9) a. We write something at my mother.

b. She brought some food at her grandma.

c. They say it at someone.

d. At Mom, from Jill.

It is difficult to explain this substitution in terms of intra-systemic overgeneralization since at is not used to introduce an indirect object in English. Furthermore, we found no errors of this type in the speech of the English monolinguals. The possibility of interference is suggested by the fact that French uses the preposition à to introduce all non-cliticized indirect objects, example : Elle a apporté de la nourriture à sa grand-mère (cf. 9b). Hence, once more the polysemous and very frequent French preposition à seems to have played a major role in the students' errors involving to.

Finally, certain aspects of the bilinguals' use of into also suggest the possibility of interference from French. As is clear from the results presented in Figure 3 above, the English-dominant and French-dominant bilinguals make more errors in the use of into than do the monolinguals. Almost all such errors -- whether committed by the monolinguals or bilinguals -- involve substitution of in for into (example : I went in the room). The fact that in French there is no distinction similar to the one made in English between in and into may partially account for the lag in acquisition of into shown for the bilingual group. However, it must be noted that other factors may be involved: (a) overgeneralization of in, as suggested by the relatively late acquisition of into by the monolinguals; (b) the tendency (for adults) to overlook the in/into distinction in casual speech; and (c) the bilinguals' lack of exposure to formal English in the school.

3. Conclusion

Given the small number of monolingual comparison subjects and the lack of socio-economic diversity within that group, our conclusions can only be tentative. However, in the absence of studies focusing on acquisition of a large number of English prepositions by first and second language learners, we offer the following concluding remarks.

Briefly, the order of acquisition of English prepositions would seem to be essentially the same for young language learners (through Grade 5, say) be they monolingual or bilingual. This finding is interesting in two respects: it suggests a ranking of the prepositions examined according to the degree of difficulty they present for the young learner; and it suggests that interlanguage transfer plays no role in the sequencing of preposition acquisition for bilinguals.

However, this last point cannot be taken to mean that interlanguage transfer can have no effect on bilinguals' preposition acquisition, since we have found that the rate at which certain prepositions (for example, the locatives to and into) are acquired by French dominant bilinguals is considerably slower than the rate of acquisition for these same prepositions by monolinguals and English-dominant bilinguals. Although the French-dominant bilinguals' relatively late acquisition of these prepositions may be explained in part by the students' limited exposure to English, this explanation does not fully account for the finding that certain prepositions (with, at (+ LOC), etc) seem to be

acquired with equal ease by the monolinguals and both groups of bilinguals. We hypothesize that the more difficult prepositions such as the locatives to and into pose more problems for the bilinguals (especially the French-dominant ones) than for the monolinguals due to the lack of distinction in French between to and at (both expressed by à) and in and into (both expressed by dans). One of the predictions of this hypothesis would be that to and into are acquired by French-English bilinguals at a slower rate than they are by English monolinguals.

This being said, it should be pointed out that even in those cases in which interlanguage transfer offers a satisfactory explanation for a large number of bilinguals' errors, one cannot easily dismiss the possibility of overgeneralization working to the exclusion of, or in combination with, interlanguage transfer. For example, it is possible that in our own findings, the influence of French à is responsible for the bilinguals' non-standard use of at with names of cities (example: We go at Quebec, We go at Montreal) whereas the process of overgeneralization has given rise to their use of constructions such as We go at my cousin's, We go at my friend's, etc. for which there are no equivalent structures with à in French. On the other hand, overgeneralization of at for to may have first given rise to constructions such as We go at my cousin's, We go at the store, etc., and the only influence of French has been to extend the use of at to constructions of the type at Montreal, at Toronto, etc. Similarly, overgeneralization of at to environments

requiring to may be accelerated or reinforced by the lack of a distinction between to and at in French.

It seems to us then that in cases where either interlanguage transfer or overgeneralization offers a plausible explanation of the data, it does not follow that the possible influence of the other process should be written off. As has been pointed out frequently in the literature on second language acquisition (cf. Selinker, Swain and Dumas 1975; Swain 1975; Tarone, Cohen and Dumas 1976) and in our own analyses of Ontarian French (cf. Canale, Mougeon, Bélanger and Ituen 1977; Mougeon, Bélanger, Canale and Ituen 1977), it is often difficult, if not impossible, to sort out the influence of either or both factors in second language learning.

Notes

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1. Redundant uses and misuses are not represented in the tables since there were too few cases of either type and they do not fit into the framework of the 'obligatory context' test item.

2. Clark qualifies his hypothesis by suggesting that it may be restricted to a comprehension model of acquisition. Obviously, our data are based directly on speech production. Nonetheless, it seems that the question of whether or not the 'complexity hypothesis' can be extended to a production model of acquisition is still an open one, and in this light our data may be relevant.

3. It is interesting to note that various researchers (e.g. Bailey, Madden and Krashen 1974; Dulay and Burt 1974b; Larsen-Freeman 1976) claim to have found an acquisition order of English morphemes common to second language learners (children and adults) regardless of native language background. However, if there is such a 'universal order' of acquisition of these morphemes, one wonders why it is not the same order found by Brown (1973) for English monolinguals. See Rosansky (1977) for discussion of the methodology and statistical analyses employed in the second language acquisition studies.

4. It is possible that these three cases of omission involve nothing more than phonetic reduction of to which we were unable to distinguish from grammatical omission of to.

5. Although substitution of the locative at for to is still high among the Grade 5 bilinguals (15/29 cases), there is a noticeable decrease in the frequency of this type of error by comparison to the Grade 2 bilinguals (39/45 substitutions of at for to). The decline of this particular error continues throughout the academic years : Mougeon and Hébrard (1975a,b) found that there were few errors of this type in the speech of Grade 9 bilinguals and none in the speech of Grade 12 bilinguals from the same localities. However, based on recent interviews we have conducted in localities where francophones outnumber anglophones, substitution of at for to seems to persist though Grade 12. It may be that the bilinguals' lower level of exposure to standard English in such localities is largely

responsible for the fossilization of this non-standard usage. See Mougeon and Canale (1977) for discussion of the role of demographic strength in language acquisition among Franco-ontarians.

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